

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE
LOK SABHA**

STARRED QUESTION NO:247
ANSWERED ON:06.12.2000
PARKINSONS AND BRAIN DISEASE
RASHID ALVI

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is correct that pesticides like Ratenone are implicated in causing Parkinsons disease or brain damage (T.O.I. 7.11.2000);
- (b) whether Government are aware that there is a great movement in the West to switch over to organic farming;
- (c) whether the Government are aware that Cuba has turned totally organic to overcome health concerns; and
- (d) if so, the thinking of the Government on this matter?

Answer

MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (DR. C.P. THAKUR)

(a)to(d): A statement is laid on the Table of the Lok Sabha.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 247 FOR 6.12.2000

It is known that chronic exposure to plant based pesticides like Rotenone can produce features similar to Parkinsonsdisease, as observed in experimental studies on rats. As per latest scientific reports, Parkinsons disease has not been observed in human beings due to chronic exposure to Rotenone. However, as per the literature on Rotenone, in humans, inhalation of dust can inter-alia cause muscle tremors, lack of coordination and symptoms similar to Parkinsons disease. Rotenone has not so far been registered under the Insecticides Act for import, manufacture or use in India. Therefore, it cannot be used in India as an Insecticide. As reported by the Ministry of Agriculture, no report of use of Rotenone as an insecticide and its consequential ill-effects has come to notice. The demand for organic food is on the increase in general, as its functional impact on human health is increasingly being recognised the world over. It is, therefore, true that many countries are turning to organic farming including Cuba, which has adopted use of organic fertilizers for certain aspects of agriculture, especially vegetable farming, in a big way. This has led to reduced dependance on artificial/chemical fertilizers but not total elimination. Government of India is also conscious about the merit of organic farming which is being promoted by way of encouraging the production and supply of organic sources of plant nutrients and biological methods of plant protection etc. These methods, however, cannot for the present, meet the requirement of huge quantity of food grains required for the large population of our country. The thrust of Government policy, therefore, is to promote the integration of chemical & organic fertilizers to adopt an optimum balance of chemical pesticides and biological pest control measures, as well as mechanical methods of weed control to attain the desired levels of crop yields.